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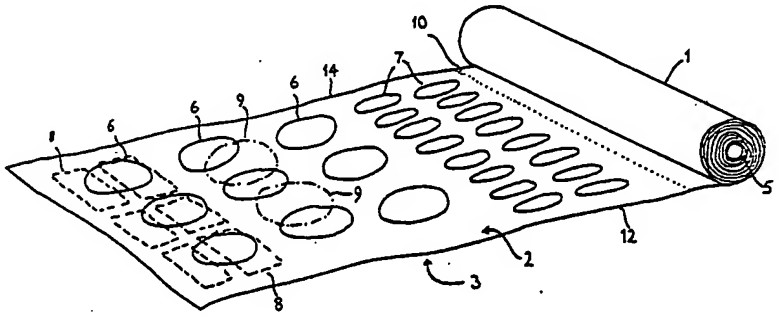
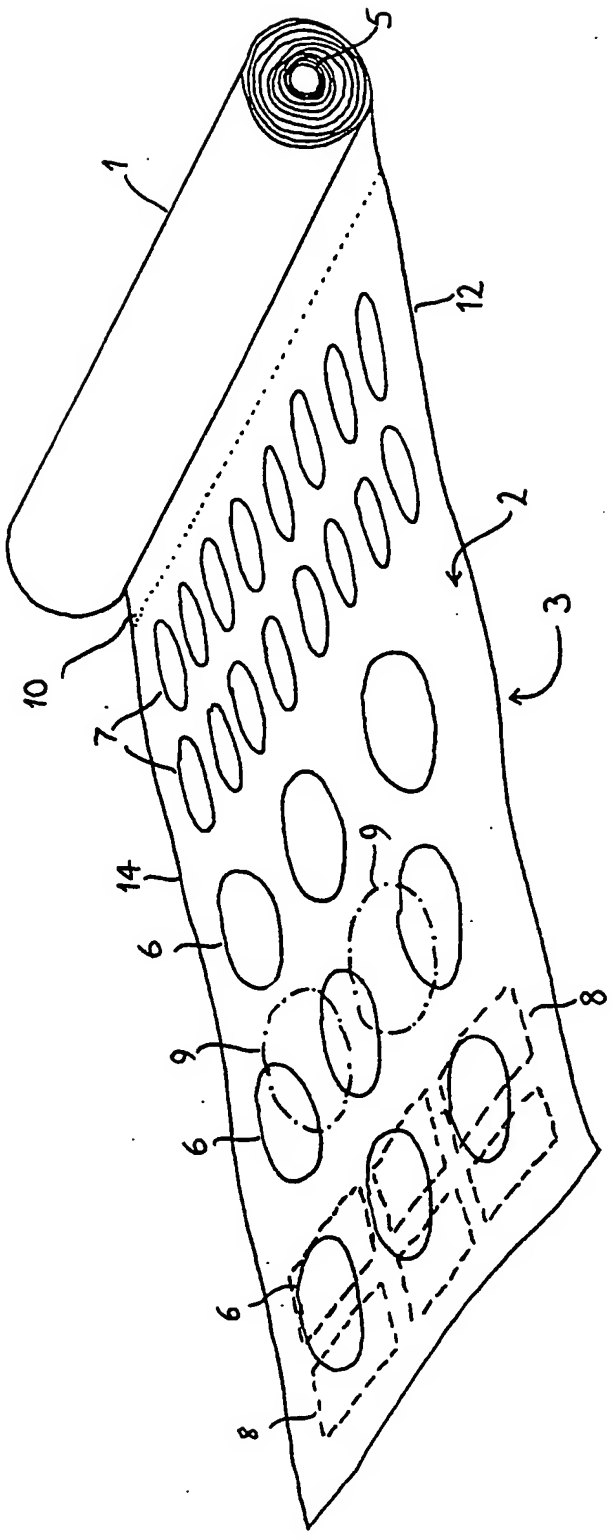
(54) Baking sheet

(57) A baking sheet, or baking sheet material (1), comprises vegetable parchment or grease-proof paper which is silicone coated on both surfaces. To assist in the manual placing of dough or other bakery products for baking the sheet is printed with lines or other markings (6-9) in such a way as to demarcate a plurality of areas indicating positions for the placing of the products on the sheet prior to baking or further processing. The printing may be in vegetable dye, applied to one or both surfaces, in monochrome or colour, and beneath or on top of the silicone coating.



At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1982.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BAKING SHEET

This invention relates to a baking sheet or baking sheet material made of parchment or grease-proof paper to be laid flat on a backing tray or other surface onto which dough or other bakery products can be placed prior to baking or further processing.

Baking sheet material is used widely in commercial bakeries as it avoids the need to grease the surface of the baking tray itself to prevent sticking of the product to that surface, and to make cleaning of the equipment easier. A length of the sheet is spread on the tray and then the dough or other bakery items are placed on the sheet either by hand or from a machine. In the latter case the positioning of the products is ensured by the machine but when it is done by hand, the positioning is not always done consistently or to best advantage either as to the location or orientation of each portion on the sheet.

Various factors determine the optimum positioning of the products on the baking sheet. First, the change of shape or size which the product will undergo during baking or other processing such as proving. Most products swell significantly but the shape particularly will determine how much any particular dimension is likely to grow. The products must therefore not be positioned too near to the edge of a sheet as the products might run over the sheet edge during processing causing unnecessary cleaning and possibly over cooking of the product on that edge. For the same reason, the products must not be placed too near to each other as they might end up touching each other leading to mis-shaped products, incorrect cooking and the added labour of separating the products.

Secondly, in order to achieve cost-effective, high volume and quality production it is necessary to

utilise equipment, such as proving chambers and baking ovens, intensively and efficiently and this means accommodating as many products as possible on each baking tray. This means that the products should be arranged without too much spacing between them and, especially where the products are not circular in plan, orienting them relative to each other to afford the most compact arrangement.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a baking sheet, or baking sheet material, comprising vegetable parchment or grease-proof paper which is silicon coated on both surfaces, wherein the sheet is printed with lines or other markings in such a way as to demarcate a plurality of areas indicating positions for the placing of dough or other bakery products on the sheet prior to baking or further processing.

The parchment or paper may be printed on one face, or on both faces, before that face, or each face, is coated with the silicon coating. This would mean that the products would not contact the printing medium and there is no risk of the latter smudging or rubbing off. Alternatively, if a suitable printing ink or other medium were used, the sheet may be printed on one or both faces over the silicon coating already on the face.

In either underprinting or overprinting, the printing medium should be non-toxic and permanent, and it may be monochrome or include one or more colours. Where the sheet is printed on both faces, the printed markings may be the same on both sides or different. A vegetable dye is considered a suitable printing medium.

Whilst the term printing is used, it will be appreciated that it is not essential always to use an applied printing ink or dye. It would be possible to

print the lines or areas of demarcation merely by slight embossing, creasing or pricking of the sheet, even conceivably merely by forming fold lines, without using any applied print medium.

In either case of printing, the areas may be demarcated by outline only or by indicating the area overall, e.g. by shading (hatching) colouring, dimpling or other textured finish.

The areas demarcated by the lines or other markings may be substantially identical with each other, for example for baking or processing a plurality of similar products; or the areas may vary from one another, or from one type to another, in size and/or shape, for dealing with various different products in a given batch. Additionally, second areas or multiple 'patterns' of perhaps up to six different types of area, shape or size, may be printed for use when baking or processing an alternative product type or various alterative product types; the second areas or each further series of areas may be in an overlapping or in a different arrangement relative to a first series of areas for use when baking or processing a first type of product. Thus, for a given batch of products, the appropriate areas are used, and the others ignored. Each series of areas may be printed in a different colour or way so that those areas are adapted to be visually and readily identified from the other areas.

The sheet may be reversible or intended for one-sided use only, and may be opaque or translucent. It may be provided as an individual printed sheet of a set size, various set sizes being supplied for use, or the sheet material may be supplied as a roll of continuous sheet material; from this, lengths or pieces may be cut for use, or the roll may be used uncut by simply extending successive lengths from the roll.

Each sheet or length may, of course, be used more than once and indeed the present invention increases the possibility of multiple use because when used properly the baking sheet is less likely to get damaged or encrusted at its edges even after several process cycles.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of positioning dough or other bakery products wherein a baking sheet, or a length of a continuous roll of baking sheet material, as specified above, is laid or fed on a baking tray or surface and in which portions of dough or other mixture to be baked or further processed are placed on the baking sheet or length of sheet material in the areas demarcated for the products to be baked, the areas corresponding individually to the shape and sizes of the portions before or after processing.

The invention may be put into practice in a number of ways but one specific embodiment will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawing which shows a length of baking sheet material, in accordance with the invention, extending from a continuous roll.

The sheet material illustrated comprises a roll 1 of grease-proof paper, silicon coated on both faces or sides 2, 3 so that in use it will not itself stick to a baking tray or surface on which it is laid, nor will bakery products stick to its upper face. The sheet material is translucent and, as shown, is provided with a plurality of different sets of markings formed by printed lines in various patterns. These lines may be printed before or after the silicon coating is applied, as explained above, and printing may be carried out during manufacture of the sheet material before rolling it onto a core 5 or as a

subsequent production process.

The lines mentioned demarcate areas for the positioning of bakery products to be processed, for example rows of circles 6 (in solid line) or smaller oval shapes 7. There are also shown, overprinted, or overlapping with some of the areas, further areas of different shapes or sizes such as dashed-line areas 8 or larger circles 9 in dash-dot lines. It will be appreciated that the various sets of areas would probably in practice need to extend over a greater length of sheet than is shown as usually a larger number of any one type of product would be processed at one time.

The sheet material may be cut or torn off in set lengths, or appropriate selected lengths as required, and perforated cross lines 10 or merely marked cross-lines could be included to facilitate this. Alternatively, the roll can be used uncut, a length of the sheet material simply being pulled out from the roll (or the roll itself being rolled along to unwind a length) as required. After repeated use of that length, it could be torn or cut off and a new length laid out when the previous one had become too damaged or messy for a further re-use.

In practice, after a sheet or length of the material is laid onto a baking tray or other surface, the dough or other bakery products can be readily placed in the areas appropriate to that product. Because the different areas are marked by different types of lines, colouring or shades, the particular type of area being used at any one time can be readily differentiated and selected by the person setting out the portions.

The sizes and shapes of the areas may correspond fairly closely to the size and shape of the

portions before processing, for example the surface, the dough or other sizes of the portions. In this case, it will be ensured that the portions are set out in the best manner, spaced apart from each other and from the sheet edges 12, 14 without the need for the person who is doing the setting out having continuously to judge by eye the best arrangement, to set the portions out carefully in that arrangement, and to maintain that proper arrangement consistently. A change from one type or product to another may also easily be dealt with, even where the product type changes on one sheet or length.

Alternatively, if precise positioning is not required, the areas may simply correspond approximately with the size and shape of the portions before or after processing so that, for example with round breadcakes, the person setting out the dough portions simply places them generally in the middle of initially oversize circles which perhaps indicate approximately the sizes to which the portions will swell or grow during baking or other processing.

The sheet material, or the method in accordance with the invention, is suitable for most if not all types of small to medium sized bakery products such as bread, breadcakes, cakes, scones, biscuits, etc. Each sheet or length of the baking sheet material may be used for up to five or more bakes or batch processes. After that, it is likely to be burnt at the edges or otherwise too messy to use again,

The invention significantly improves production and increases productivity by the simple, effective and inexpensive expedient of printing the baking sheet material. By contrast, printing of the baking trays themselves or of the other working surfaces in such a way that the printing shows through

plain translucent baking sheet material would be relatively expensive and less easy to use, and it would nevertheless, still lead to product portions being positioned near to the edges of the sheet unless the sheet itself is always laid on the surface accurately and held securely during setting out. For the same reasons, the use of a 'master' layout sheet or template placed under the baking sheet for the setting out of the portions would not be satisfactory.

CLAIMS:

1. Baking sheet, or baking sheet material, comprising vegetable parchment or grease-proof paper which is silicone coated on both surfaces, wherein the sheet is printed with lines or other markings in such a way as to demarcate a plurality of areas indicating positions for the placing of dough or other bakery products on the sheet prior to baking or further processing.

2. Baking sheet as claimed in claim 1, in which the parchment or paper is printed on one face before that face is coated with silicone coating.

3. Baking sheet as claimed in claim 1, in which the parchment or paper is printed on one face over the silicone coating on that face.

4. Baking sheet as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3, in which the lines or other markings are printed with a vegetable dye.

5. Baking sheet as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the areas are substantially identical with each other for baking a plurality of similar products.

6. Baking sheet as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, in which the areas vary from one another, or from one type to another, in size or shape, for baking various different products.

7. Baking sheet as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the printing is monochrome or includes one or more colours.

8. Baking sheet as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which second areas for use when baking an alternative product type are printed in an overlapping or in a different arrangement of first areas for use when baking a first type of product.

9. Baking sheet as claimed in any one of the

preceding claims as a roll of continuous sheet material from which pieces can be cut for use.

10. A method of positioning dough or other bakery products wherein a baking sheet, or a continuous roll of baking sheet material, as specified above, is laid or fed on to a baking tray or surface, and in which portions of dough or other mixture to be baked or further processed are placed on the baking sheet or length of sheet material in the areas demarcated for the products to be baked, the areas corresponding individually to the shapes and sizes of the portions before or after processing.

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